



# We always dream in COLOR

As a deep dive into our archives reveals, some *color trends appear and reappear*, emerging anew every few decades with some interesting shifts that reflect the times. Take a look.

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## Color through the decades PASTELS

Happy cotton candy hues such as *petal pink* and *butter yellow* surged after WWI and the Jazz Age glow-up of the '20s and '30s. By the 1980s, coating interiors in lilac and aqua blue was a way of saying (to paraphrase Cyndi Lauper), we all just wanna have fun.



### 1925

The acronym WFH (work from home) wasn't in use then, but this vignette of a desk made the cover in November and harks back to the dusky tones of the preceding Arts and Crafts era.



### 2020

Bringing a vacation vibe to your home—as we all so desperately needed in 2020—was as easy as a yellow lantern lamp and soft tropical pastels like this pale green floor.



### 1950s

First Lady and color influencer Mamie Eisenhower was so pink-obsessed she used pink cotton balls in her bathroom. Postwar, pink and other optimistic, island-inspired tones like minty green and sky blue surged. All the better to welcome Hawaii to statehood in 1959.



### 2018

Millennial pink had its own moment, and it shows no signs of fading. We saw the soft shade on walls and architectural features, including actor Hilary Duff's screen-siren-worthy front doors in L.A.



### 1985

Living rooms were mauve-elous in the '80s. Taupe undertones made the color more sophisticated than the sweeter '50s version.

PHOTOS: (OPPOSITE) ADAM ALBRIGHT, (DINING ROOM) DAVID TSAY, (HILARY DUFF) JUSTIN COTT, INTERIOR DESIGN (DINING ROOM) LIZ STRONG



Color through the decades

# AMERICANA

Few palettes are as timeless as Old Glory's red, white, and blue. Together, the trio are especially dynamic—whether in *bold primary colors* or *faded timeworn hues*. It's no wonder red and blue rooms have appeared on our pages again and again, especially around America's bicentennial in 1976.



### 2018

This Connecticut guest room, with glossy indigo floors and Albert Hadley Fireworks wallpaper, is a sophisticated nod to the Stars and Stripes.

### 1996

If you've ever binged '90s TV as visual comfort food, you may want to sink into this stripe-on-stripe coziness. What better place to curl up than on color-blocked pillows in a palette straight out of *The Simpsons*?



### 1944

Society decorator and maximalist Dorothy Draper combined patriotism and the postwar need to nest in layered living rooms. This one follows her lead with bouquet-tossed walls, flouncy red bows on lamps, and the pink ribbon trim on Mr.'s "lazy red chair."



### 1973

Graphic wall treatments were out-of-sight (as in groovy) in the age of *Saturday Night Fever*. The disco aesthetic comes through in the bold red sofa and shag carpet that energize this open-plan living room.



### 1950

According to a 1950 BHG survey, "Most men preferred blue" as a living room hue. Pairing dusky blue walls with strong reds and yellow (another primary favorite) gives this midcentury room extra panache.



PHOTOS: (OPPOSITE) CARSON DOWNING, (BEDROOM) WILLIAM WALDRON; INTERIOR DESIGN: (BEDROOM) HARRY HEISSMANN INC.



ALMANDINE  
BHG1042  
Better Homes & Gardens™

DANUBE  
SW 6803  
Sherwin-Williams

RED BANNER  
4-11  
Pratt & Lambert

LIFE FORCE  
P500-4  
Behr





Color through the decades

# EARTH TONES

When things go topsy-turvy, there's little that's more grounding than Mother Nature—as evidenced by our yen for earth tones in times of upheaval. *Forest greens, tawny browns, and deep oranges* make every day feel—at least in our homes—like a walk in the park.



**1938**  
Muted shades of apricot and chocolate soothed us during the Great Depression. This living room of a BHG editor was decorated by his wife, who prized the combo for its restfulness.



**1967**  
*The Brady Bunch* set (1969) epitomized this era, when avocado and lime paired perfectly with Creamsicle orange. The playfulness reflected the desire for rich, bold colors.



**2022**  
Woodland hues—think pale greens and midtone browns—underscore our deepening connection with nature (#biophilia).



**1970s**  
Before #bohohostyle became a hashtag, there were hippies living in spaces laden with macramé, rattan, and spider plants. To “unbox” any small room, this 1977 article advised, “add a vivid swath of fabric” to the wall.



**2021**  
Warm terra firma browns are prized for their coziness and versatility. In this nook, where walls are similar to Benjamin Moore Baked Cumin with trim a few shades darker, a tufted armchair in royal blue and an icy blue pillow create a fresh, calming palette.



**1993**  
Even during the height of Seattle's grunge scene, Ralph Lauren reigned, bringing his particularly moneyed brand of hunter green, warm woods, and silver spoon spirit to homes everywhere.

PHOTOS: (OPPOSITE) ADAM ALBRIGHT, (2022 LIVING ROOM) LESLEY UNRUH, (2021 LIBRARY) JOSHUA MCHUGH, INTERIOR DESIGN; (2022 LIVING ROOM) MARK CUNNINGHAM INC., (2021 LIBRARY) MCGRATH II



Color through the decades

# JEWEL TONES

Emerald. Garnet. Topaz. Sapphire. In periods of upward mobility and increased creativity, these *eye candy colors* have sparkled in our homes like jewels in a crown. They're forever alluring and scene-stealing as backdrops or accents in any room in the house.



## 1926

It's no surprise colors became all the more cinematic in the same time period. Art Deco was born and King Tut's tomb was discovered. We called it "Adventuring in Color."



## 1967

A cultural revolution was happening, and patterns echoed society's urge for individuality, as seen in this purple-on-blue bedroom. The "fanciful trellis retreat" included checked bedding and abstract floral walls.



## 1984

With MTV and *Miami Vice* on the air, electric neons were all but required. As we wrote in 1987, "you'll lend rich, almost old-world appeal to any setting with deep shades of amethyst, emerald, sapphire, and ruby."



## 2021

We hunkered down and played together. Monopoly and Uno, sure, but we also amused ourselves with our interior decor—experimenting with bold color combinations like cobalt, teal, and yellow.



## 2018

When gray was the choice main color, all the extracurricular colors dialed up their richness for contrast. Malachite and Gen Z yellow went toe-to-toe as designer favorites.

PHOTOS: (CENTER) KAY TEUTSCH, (LIVING ROOM) WERNER STRAUBE, (KITCHEN) MARY COSTA; INTERIOR DESIGN: (LIVING ROOM) COREY DAMEN JENKINS, (KITCHEN) BLACK LACQUER DESIGN



Color through the decades

# NEUTRALS

Neutrals are easy on the eye—maxing out the *relaxation factor* in any interior, especially when paired with touchable textures. But as the midcentury modern movement and high-fashion 1970s proved, neutral hues are anything but sleepy.



## 1948

With the Great Depression behind us and the Jet Age on the horizon, modernist interiors propelled tans and taupes into trend territory. This living room had that “feeling of spaciousness you get with modern homes.”



## 1970

Inflation spiked and gas shortages caused pain at the pump, but one affordable DIY added Halston-era glam for the cost of a gallon of paint: a black accent wall, seen on our pages several times in the 1970s.



## 1999

Shabby Chic, Rachel Ashwell's brand of sun-faded fabrics and distressed painted pieces, soared as we craved simpler times.



## 2015

All those vanilla hues cooled, and 'greige' was suddenly infiltrating the previous decade's beiges—supplying a quiet place to rest the eyes as tech gadgets became omnipresent.



## 2005

The early aughts were a boom time of McMansions, and it seemed everyone wanted to live like *Under the Tuscan Sun*. How to import the look? Tawny neutrals with a side of sandy neutrals. ■

PHOTOS: (CENTER) CARSON DOWNING, (2015 LIVING ROOM) WERNER STRAUBE, (2005 LIVING ROOM) ALISE O'BRIEN